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SONGS OF  
FRENCH CANADA.









SONGS OF FRENCH CANADA



# SONGS OF FRENCH CANADA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

LAWRENCE J. BURPEE



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## PREFACE

THIS little collection of English translations of the poetry and folk-songs of French Canada has at least the merit of novelty. That the translations are unequal in quality was perhaps to be expected. That they do not afford much more than a suggestion of the extent, variety, and value of French-Canadian poetry is the misfortune, not the fault, of the editor, whose task was not to select from a large number of translations, but rather to search diligently for a sufficient number to serve his purpose. It is matter for regret that the attempts to render into English verse the poems of such well-known French-Canadians as Louis Fréchette, Octave Crémazie, and William Chapman, to mention no others, have been so few and far between. It is still more unfortunate that no translations whatever could be found

## Preface

of the work of Émile Nelligan or of Pamphile le May, two of the most brilliant of French-Canadian poets.

The latter part of the book is devoted to a collection of translations of the inimitable folk-songs of French Canada, chiefly by William McLennan and George T. Lanigan. Mr. McLennan's versions were published in his *Songs of Old Canada* (Montreal, 1886), and Mr. Lanigan's in his *National Ballads of Canada* (Montreal, 1865). Both these little books are long out of print, and the latter is now exceedingly scarce. It has therefore seemed worth while to include a selection from both in the present volume.

For permission to use these versions the editor is indebted to the translators ; in the case of the late Mr. McLennan's translations he is indebted to Mrs. McLennan, and in the case of the late Mr. Lanigan's versions to Mr. R. Lanigan.

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# Songs of French Canada

## THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

(LOUIS FRÉCHETTE)

HARMONIOUS groups, sweet Edens on calm  
streams,  
Countless oases robed in golden flowers,  
Which waves caress and the fair reed  
embowers  
With rich confusion of its tall green gleams ;  
Wave-cradled groves, that song-birds lull to  
dreams,  
Where zephyrs sway the nests in leafy  
towers ;  
Mysterious maze fresh from perpetual  
showers,  
Green chaplet strewn 'mid the blue water's  
beams.

## The Thousand Islands

When first I saw, 'neath your o'erhanging  
shade,  
Your mirrored forms in the calm water's  
face,  
A warm June sun gilded each green  
retreat,  
Soft, thrilling perfumes rose from every  
glade,  
And I believed myself in that dream-place  
Where sylph and humming-birds hold  
revels sweet !

## LIBERTY

(LOUIS FRÉCHETTE)

A CHILD, I set the thirsting of my mouth  
To the gold chalices of loves that craze.  
Surely, alas ! I have found therein but drouth,  
Surely has sorrow darkened o'er my days.  
While worldlings chase each other madly  
round  
Their giddy track of frivolous gaiety,  
Dreamer, my dream earth's utmost longings  
bound :  
One love alone is mine, my love is Liberty

I have sung them all : youth's lightsome-  
ness that fleets,  
Pure friendship, my most fondly cherished  
dreams,

## Liberty

Wild blossoms and the winds that steal their  
sweets,

Wood odours, and the star that whitely  
gleams.

But our hearts change ; the spirit dulls its  
edge

In the chill contact with reality ;  
These vanished like the foam-bells on the  
sedge :

I sing one burden now, my song is Liberty.

I drench my spirit in ecstasy, consoled,  
And my gaze trembles toward the azure  
arc,

When in the wide world-records I behold  
Flame like a meteor God's finger through  
the dark.

But if, at times, bowed over the abyss  
Wherein man crawls toward immortality,  
Beholding here how sore his suffering is,  
I make my prayer with tears, it is for  
Liberty.



## THE SNOW-BIRDS

(LOUIS FRÉCHETTE)

WHEN 'neath the wintry skies  
The snow-clad valleys lie ;  
When ever-green arise  
The stately pines on high ;  
When from their branches tost,  
Dissolving in the sun,  
Fast falls the silvery frost ;  
When April seems to stray  
From out its destined way,—  
From Spring to us they come,  
These messengers so gay !

From the cold and the snow,  
From tempest and flood,  
May God in His love  
His protection bestow,  
Little birds !

## The Snow-birds

Far from softer rests,  
In more benignant climes—  
Where sun of summer shines ;  
Where, deep in silken moss,  
Untouched by snow or frost,  
Lie hidden other nests—  
You wing your speedy flight  
To shores as bleak as night,  
    May sends you on your ways  
    To tell of happier days !

From the cold and the snow,  
From tempest and flood,  
May God in His love  
His protection bestow,  
    Little birds !

When seen, your silken wing,  
O little birds, you bring  
Peace to the mournful soul ;  
Away the dark clouds roll ;  
The heart is stirred with joy,  
With joy without alloy ;

## The Snow-birds

From God, sweet birds, you bring  
The hope of gladsome spring.

From the cold and the snow,  
From tempest and flood,  
May God in His love  
His protection bestow,  
Little birds !

## SAGUENAY

(LOUIS FRÉCHETTE)

THE forest has spells to enchant me,  
The mountain has power to enthrall ;  
Yet the grace of a wayside blossom  
Can stir my heart deeper than all.

O towering steeps, that are mirrored  
On Saguenay's darkening breast !  
O grim rocky heights, sternly frowning,  
The thunders have smitten your crest !

O sentinels, piercing the cloudland,  
Stand forth in stupendous array !  
My brow, by your shadows enshrouded,  
Is humbled before you to-day.

## Saguenay

But, peaks that are gilded by Heaven,  
Defiant you stand in your pride !  
From glories too distant above me,  
I turn to the friend at my side.

## MILLE-ÎLES

(OCTAVE CRÉMAZIE)

WHEN Eve had from the tree of life  
With her fair hand plucked death,  
Upon the earth remorse appeared,  
As blight fell from its breath.

Archangels, then, upon their wings  
Bore Eden, stilled, away  
And placed it in the heavens above,  
Where spheres eternal sway.

But, as they upward winged their flight,  
They let fall on their way  
Fair flowers from Eden's bowers divine,  
As signs of their brief stay.

## Mille-îles

And into the mighty river fell  
These flowers of varied hue,  
To form the beauteous Thousand  
Isles,  
A Paradise to the view.

## MOTHER AND CHILD

(WILLIAM CHAPMAN)

FROM old America our fathers, wending  
Over strange seas to solitudes unknown,  
Wrought centuries Homeric ere the ending  
On Abram's Plains beheld them over-  
thrown.

By famine weakened and by numbers stricken,  
Vainly they called to Louis' deafened ears ;  
Wantons alone could that base wanton  
quicken,  
And our last hope went down in blood  
and tears.

Conquered ? Oh, yes—the victors find us  
loyal  
To oaths recorded, but our hearts go free ;  
They yearn across the deep with love as royal  
As ever heroes gave, O France, to thee.



## Mother and Child

Despite neglect, the true-born child must  
cherish

Ever the mother, though she walked  
astray ;

The duty of his soul can never perish,  
Nor cease from hope to make her glad  
some day.

Never by force the filial bond is riven :

Because thy bosom to our lips did thrill,  
Because thy blood throughout our veins is  
driven,

Because that thou art France, we love  
thee still.

Little it matter if neglect or distance

Hide us from her, as ocean fogs immense ;  
Ever her forehead's glorious persistence  
Sublimely lifts a radiance intense.

It lightens round the world a beamy pleasure,  
And, 'spite fierce thunderclaps that  
ominous roll

## Mother and Child

From dark events, we hear the racy measure  
Of her fine humours freshening man's soul.

More sweetly fall her accents than the mur-  
mur

Of wakening birds saluting morning clear,  
Her charming tones could come to us no  
firmer

Were the beloved lips against our ear.

Ever she glowed aloft, a brilliant vision  
Enchanting Europe, even when Fates  
unkind

And Teuton victors voiced a vain derision,  
Deeming her star eternally declined.

Though then the blind and shame-forgetting  
neighbour

Spat on her brow, insulting all her woe,  
*We* saw her rise portending over Tabor  
In splendour clearer than her Past could  
show.

## Mother and Child

Thou art, O France, to us the fertile Mother,  
From whom the World an endless thirst  
allays ;

'Thou art the Eye, more piercing than all  
other,  
Scanning through mists of Time man's  
coming days ;

The Head that guides the Future's ship to  
haven ;

The Hand that turns the mighty volume's  
page,

Whereon the Ideal's characters are graven  
To inspire the human soul from age to age.

Behold, an hundred years have long been  
ended

Since vanquished France her weeping child  
forsook ;

To manhood's strength the babe has far  
ascended,

His origin august beams in his look.

## Mother and Child

Wealthy and proud and free, by hardy  
training

In iron contests conquering adverse Fate,  
Fighting enormous forests, slowly gaining,  
To Progress all his energies vibrate.

Superbly labouring, Founder and Creator,  
Soldier, Apostle, valorous Pioneer,  
From arctic solitudes to thronged Equator  
His furrowing keels plough down the  
arduous year.

Unsullied gleams his path when back he  
glances,  
He eyes the morning, brave his youthful  
stride,  
On trails of living light his course advances ;  
Henceforth the Child may claim the  
Mother's pride.

# NIAGARA

(WILLIAM CHAPMAN)

BENUMBED with the shock of its rush in our  
ears,

Its groans and its moans, its sighs and its  
tears,

We behold as it seems, while night's flag is  
unfurled,

Down the vastness of space gliding swiftly  
a world.

But all tremblingly there, to our opening eyes,  
Hangs o'er that abyss a prismatic surprise

Which, with its great scarf, in its dazzling folds,  
The soul of the precipice lovingly holds.

Unceasing that vapour o'er yon cavern re-  
volves,

And as slowly ascends as it slowly dissolves,  
Drawing with it, astonished or pensive, the  
gaze—

Till it soars far above the opaqueness of  
haze—

## Niagara

Towards that ether transparent, almost  
without tinge,  
Whence the curtain of Peace drops its gold-  
spangled fringe.

But there's nothing to stay that wild  
cataract's rush ;  
For the sea has its rest and the thunder its  
hush,  
E'en the volcanic peak has its moments of  
peace ;  
Niagara's mad sweepings alone never cease,  
For aye does it roll, ever boil, ever leap,  
Unfathomed, unchecked, crowding down its  
own steep ;  
While its waters reflect the blue dome of the  
sky,  
Inexhaustible tread like unto the Most High.

That Colossus possesses the thunder-god's  
lip,  
To address Him whose Hand holds the earth  
in its grip—

## Niagara

And those vapours of white, that all 'round  
interblend,

Like incense in wreaths to Jehovah ascend.

Irresistible giant, unapproachable crest,

Its turbulent torrent none ever shall breast ;

Man dreads it, e'en the birds fly off in  
affright,

Yet that monstrous gulf has fecundity's  
might—

It gives life to the flowers, which, to then  
fertilise,

With a sprinkling of dew it seems to baptize.

It will fall for all time, it will fall without truce,

Till the hour when man ceases to know  
human love,

When proclaiming the end, from the regions  
above,

An Angel comes down to our poor trembling  
sphere ;

In his flight, he'll behold Niagara rear

High over its rock, like some altar aglow,

The ineffable hues of earth's final rainbow.

## TO BRITTANY

(WILLIAM CHAPMAN)

I NEVER trod thy cliffs' aspiring height,  
Nor saw thy pines their golden balsam  
store,  
Nor watched thy balanced shallops winging  
white,  
Yet, Breton land, I love thee evermore.

My love is strong as thy old oaks at core,  
Toward them my heart is often taking  
flight,  
Because we hold, throughout our land, a  
right  
In that pure blood which through thy veins  
doth pour.

Yes, thee I love with ancient memories—  
Thy reeds, thy heaths where Druid work  
endures,



## To Brittany

Thy storied people and thy shore-beat seas ,  
And when returning May with balm  
allures,  
I dream the murmurous evening's eastern  
breeze  
Brings airs of perfume vaguely from thy  
moors.

## TO MY TWO MOTHERS

(WILLIAM CHAPMAN)

### I

MOTHER, my book I carry, before 'tis wholly  
done,

To the mound where thou dost tarry be-  
neath the grass and sun ;

Mother, I bring devotion ; a bird sings clear  
to-day ;

Dost thou feel, in my step, emotion of the  
perfume of the May ?

Mother, dost thou in slumbers my accents  
comprehend ?

Before I give my numbers to the heights I  
would ascend

I come to thee, to render the verses that I  
wreathe—

Surely you listen tender, surely you see me  
breathe.

## To My Two Mothers

Mother, remove a minute the shroud that  
hides thy face,  
The beams that shone within illumed my  
path to grace ;  
Unclose thine eyes ; thy fingers may search  
my written sheaves,  
Thy touch, where'er it linger, find naught  
that stains the leaves.

Though strong with all my spirit my verse  
hath been outpoured,  
No Innocent need fear it, for I have feared  
the Lord ;  
My work was sometimes written with mid-  
night tapers by,  
But nearly all was litten from the great blue  
shining sky.

In solitude I laboured a book austere and  
chaste,  
For Christ I wrought un-neighboured, His  
truth my spirit braced,

## To My Two Mothers

Ever thy soul was ringing in mine a holy  
    sound  
That fashioned all my singing in probity  
    profound.

I sing for Art all purely, I sing for holy  
    fanés,  
Though lost in deafness surely an evil time  
    remains ;  
I sing the notes supernal our history awoke,  
My chants of deed eternal the ancestors  
    invoke.

I boast with pride the glories that deck our  
    native earth—  
Thou, artist soul, thy stories so taught me  
    from my birth ;  
I boast th' imperial mazes where shadowy  
    forests rise,  
And sing what pureness gazes from Winter's  
    sparkling eyes.

## To My Two Mothers

Vanquished and victors, fairly I deal to each  
their meed ;  
Smiles I profess but rarely, and many tears  
I plead,  
To aid of souls in trouble my lyric music  
starts,  
And often I knock double upon the doors of  
hearts.

If in my poems truly I set what pleaseth thee,  
Then, mother, kiss them duly—yea, stoop  
to blessing me,  
That they may live for ever, and tell to  
future days  
How I adore thee ever, O mother of my  
praise !

## II

And thou, my mother nation, hear'st thou  
my accents bless,  
Across the sea's elation that springtime airs  
caress ?—

## To My Two Mothers

I come to tread the flowers of thy enchanting  
ways,  
And quaff the sparkling showers of Art thy  
fountains raise.

France that I ever cherish, whose name my  
heart reveres,  
Remote my voice might perish, failing to  
reach thine ears ;  
I cross the barrier ocean, a thrall to thy  
renown,  
Bearing my book's devotion, to lay the  
tribute down.

In worship have I striven to celebrate thy  
pride,  
Exalt the triumphs given to spread thy fame  
world-wide,  
The holy works enacted thy forceful zeal to  
prove,  
For Jesus' sake exacted, and human nature's  
love.

## To My Two Mothers

I lack the lute all golden thy hards, O France,  
    possess,  
Their speech sonorous, olden, of piercing  
    tenderness ;  
Indulge my rustic chaunting, upon my knees  
    I crave,  
Forgive me all that's wanting, and all that  
    pleaseth save.

My singing is the singing that trembles all  
    sincere  
From artless worship ringing in holy places  
    dear ;  
It is the singing river, it is the singing breeze,  
It is the songbirds' quiver to the Maker of  
    the trees.

If gold be gleaming surely within my mass  
    of ore,  
I might not work it purely though I wrought  
    evermore,

## To My Two Mothers

And the humble poet merits nothing, save  
that he has sung  
With the passion he inherits for the glory  
of thy tongue.

In my pages, if thou readest, there is proof  
shall glad thy heart,  
That the children whom thou breedest,  
though by oceans set apart,  
While thy vital sap preserving in a world so  
far from thee,  
O my France, are never swerving from thy  
sacred memory.

Despite the victors' ruling, and despite the  
blow of Fate,  
Mother, we make no puling, and our patient  
hearts are great ;  
By the green St. Lawrence River, with the  
English flag above,  
Oh ! for ever and for ever thy children give  
thee love.



## AUTUMN SONG

(ACHILLE FRÉCHETTE)

AWAY, ye vain numberless shadows, unsplendid,

Unperfumed, uncoloured, 'mid which my life wended !

Now the gloom of my dream is illumed by her beauty,

Her heart-stirring beauty.

'Neath murky grey skies trailed my heavy-foot hours,

On into the bleakness where evening lowers ;  
To my travail she came with the cheer of her joyance,

Her spirit and joyance.

Fruits fallen, nests vacant, and meadows in stubble,

My path ever hardened by cold airs above ;

## Autumn Song

Oh! the long arid days I went lonely in  
trouble,  
Till the thirst of my heart was allayed by  
her love,  
The wine of her love.

Late flowers, breathe fragrance! O branches  
rejoicing  
With birds that again come alighting in bliss.  
Dear creatures, their anthems a thousand  
times voicing  
My joy that she blesses my lips with her kiss,  
Her lips and her kiss!

## MY LITTLE ROOM

(HENRIETTE CHAUVEAU)

THOU hast charms for me alone,  
Little chamber, all my own ;  
Thou dost wear the hues I prize,  
Vying with the azure skies ;  
Thou hast just such gentle light  
As the stars that deck the night ;  
The sweet incense of my prayer  
Unto heaven thou dost bear,  
For 'tis here I hold converse  
With Him who rules the universe ;  
Then what sweet, refreshing grace  
Is diffused throughout the place,  
Changing it into a shrine,  
Of God's holy will the sign.

Every object that I see  
Brings a pleasant thought to me ;

## My Little Room

Hark ! my bird, with spirit free,  
Utters such sweet melody  
That on fancy's wings along  
I am wafted with its song.

And if ever 'neath a cloud  
Of melancholy I am bowed,  
To my desk I can repair  
And indict my sorrows there.  
'Tis the safest confidant  
Of the woes the mind which haunt,  
Safe as is a mother's breast  
To her daughter's sad unrest.

If of memory the source  
Lose its freshness and its force ;  
If to weariness a prey—  
Shall I sigh my hours away ?  
No ! within my little room  
There is what can chase the gloom,  
Books of memory take the place  
And of sadness leave no trace,

## My Little Room

All that to the sentient heart  
Can quick sympathy impart,  
With what nature can contain.  
In the "Sister's Tale" I find  
Offspring of a noble mind,  
Language pure and purpose high,  
A true soul's holy poesie.

Next, delighted, I peruse  
Eugenie's sweet, dreamy muse,  
Whose rapt style is like no other,  
Save that of her poet-brother—  
Mental twins of wondrous birth,  
Lost, alas ! too soon to earth.  
Over books like these I pore,  
Dearest of my classic store—  
Flowers, whose exquisite perfume  
Makes thee fragrant, little room :  
But I cannot number all  
The delights within my call,  
Though I fain would sing the rest,  
As the lark its dainty nest

## My Little Room

Praises with its gladsome notes,  
As aloft in air it floats :  
And each other gentle bird,  
As it upward soars, is heard  
Warbling forth, where'er it roam,  
The praises of its humble home.

## O CANADA !

(A. B. ROUTHIER)

O CANADA ! land of our sires,  
Whose brow is bound with glorious bays,  
The sword thy valorous hand can wield  
And bear the Cross that faith inspires,  
What mighty deeds hast thou beheld,  
An epopee of glorious sights !  
The faith, thy shield through all thy days,  
Shall still protect our homes and rights,  
Shall still protect our homes and rights.

By the broad river's giant stream,  
Beneath God's ever-watchful sight,  
Canadians thrive in Hope's bright gleam,  
Sprung from a great and noble race,  
Cradled by self-denial's hand,  
In the new world high Heaven did trace  
The pathway of their progress grand,  
And ever guided by its light

## O Canada !

They'll guard the banner of their land,  
They'll guard the banner of their land.

Christ's forerunner, their patron saint,  
From him they bear a crown of fire,  
Enemies of the tyrant's base restraint  
The depths of loyalty their deeds inspire.  
And their proud liberty they would keep  
With never-ending concord blest,  
While by their genius sown deep  
Upon our soil the truth shall rest,  
Upon our soil the truth shall rest.

O sacred love of altar and of throne,  
May thy immortal breath our spirits fire !  
'Midst other races as we hold  
Thy law whose sway we ever own,  
May we as brethren all aspire,  
With faith's control, while clear shall ring,  
As from our sires in days of old,  
The conquering cry, "For Christ and  
King,"  
The conquering cry, "For Christ and  
King."



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

PATRON SAINT OF CANADA

(FRANÇOIS REAL ANGERS)

O PATRON Saint, whose day we celebrate,  
Behold thy children gathered before thee ;  
Beneath thy glorious banner they await  
Thy blessing and a happy destiny.  
Round thee, the chosen watchword of their  
race,  
Canadians rally ; by thy name are known  
Among the nations ; oh ! thy children own,  
And ever more protect them by thy grace.

By thee conducted to the wilderness,  
Here our brave fathers made themselves a  
home,  
We now this noble heritage possess—  
Where once uncultured savages did roam.

## St. John the Baptist

And when these annals of our land we trace,  
The praise is thine, by whose name we are  
known

Among the nations ; oh ! thy children own,  
And ever more protect them by thy grace.

In our dark days of needful trial, thou  
Didst cheer us with the hope of days to  
come,

And didst us guide through all (as thou dost  
now)

When we by fear and doubt were stricken  
dumb.

So in our hearts thy love shall find a place  
For ever, by whose dear name we are  
known

Among the nations ; oh ! thy children own,  
And ever more protect them by thy grace.

## THE CANADIAN EXILE

(ANTOINE GÉRIN-LAJOIE)

WEEPING sorely as he journeyed  
Over many a foreign strand,  
A Canadian exile wandered,  
Banished from his native land.

Sad and pensive, sitting lonely  
By a rushing river's shore,  
To the flowing waters spake he  
Words that fondest memories bore :

“ If you see my own dear country—  
Most unhappy is its lot—  
Say to all my friends, O river,  
That they never are forgot.

“ Oh ! those days so full of gladness,  
Now forever are they o'er,  
And alas ! my own dear country,  
I shall never see it more.

## The Canadian Exile

“ No, dear Canada, O my homeland !  
But upon my dying day,  
Fondly shall my last look wander  
To thee, beloved, far away.”

# O CANADA, MON PAYS, MES AMOURS

(SIR GEORGE ÉTIENNE CARTIER)

“ No land so fair as one’s own land,”  
Is what the good old adage says ;  
By that and custom, too, I stand  
To sing to-day my country’s praise.  
The stranger sees with envious eyes  
St. Lawrence’s tide majestic roll,  
Gazing, the proud Canadian cries,  
*O Canada, my Land, my Soul !*

What purling brooks by meadows wide  
In myriads thread our fertile plains ;  
How rise aloft the hills of pride  
We see afar in ranging chains ;  
Chutes, rapids, valleys, forest brakes—  
Where can more noble scenes unroll ?  
Who fail to love thy limpid lakes ?  
*O Canada, my Land, my Soul !*

## O Canada, mon pays

Each country boasts its ladies fair  
    (I quite believe with reason, too),  
But our Canadian girls, I swear,  
    In charm can be surpassed by few.  
So cheerful they, and so sincere,  
    Yet of the French coquettish rôle  
They've just enough to make them dear —  
    *O Canada, my Land, my Soul !*

Canadians, sons of merry sires,  
    They love the laugh, are gay and free,  
Warm glow their hospitable fires,  
    Quick, brave, and mild and mannerly ;  
To country ever staunchly leal,  
    Due freedom is our patriot goal,  
Our watchword still the peace, the weal  
    *Of Canada, our Land, our Soul !*

## A LA CLAIRE FONTAINE

As by the crystal fount I strayed,  
On which the dancing moonbeams played,  
The water seemed so clear and bright  
I bathed myself in its delight :  
I loved thee from the hour we met,  
And never can that love forget.

The water seemed so clear and bright,  
I bathed myself in its delight ;  
The nightingale above my head,  
As sweet a stream of music shed :  
I loved thee from the hour we met,  
And never can that love forget.

The nightingale above my head,  
As sweet a stream of music shed :  
Sing, nightingale ! thy heart is glad !  
But I could weep, for mine is sad !  
I loved thee from the hour we met,  
And never can that love forget.

## A la claire fontaine

Sing, nightingale ! thy heart is glad !  
But I could weep, for mine is sad !  
For I have lost my lady fair,  
And she has left me to despair :  
    I loved thee from the hour we met,  
    And never can that love forget.

For I have lost my lady fair,  
And she has left me to despair,  
For that I gave not, when she spoke,  
The rose that from its tree I broke :  
    I loved thee from the hour we met,  
    And never can that love forget.

For that I gave not, when she spoke,  
The rose that from its tree I broke :  
I wish the rose was on its tree,  
And my beloved again with me !  
    I loved thee from the hour we met,  
    And never can that love forget.



## ENTRE PARIS ET SAINT-DENIS

'TWIXT Paris fair and Saint-Denis

The dance was up one day,

And all the ladies of the town

Looked on in brave array.

*Sur la feuille ron . . . don, don, don,*

*Sur la joli, joli, feuille ronde.*

And all the ladies of the town

Looked on in brave array—

All save the Princess fair, who glanced

Adown the dusty way.

The Princess fair cast wistful looks

Adown the dusty way,

And soon she saw her messenger

Ride from where Nantés lay.

She saw her faithful messenger

His way from Nantés wing ;

## Entre Paris et Saint-Denis

“ Now, messenger, from Nantés town  
What tidings do you bring ?

“ Now, messenger, bold messenger,  
What news from Nantés fair ? ”

“ The only news I bring, fair dame,  
Your lover bade me bear.

“ The only news I bring is this—  
Your lover bade me say,  
That he has found a sweetheart new,  
Choose you a gallant gay.

“ ‘ Choose you another gallant gay,  
For I’ve a sweetheart rare.’ ”

“ Now, is she wiser far than I,  
Or is her face more fair ?

“ Now is she wiser far than I,  
Or is her face more fair ? ”

“ Although not near so fair as you,  
Her wisdom’s past compare.

## Entre Paris et Saint-Denis

“ Her beauty is not like to yours,  
But secret lore she knows,  
She makes the snow, she makes the hail,  
She makes the wind that blows.

“ She makes the wind that blows so free,  
She makes the snow so fine ;  
At midnight hour, within her bower,  
She makes the sun to shine.

“ She makes the sun to shine again  
At midnight in her bower,  
And on the borders of the sea  
Makes rosemary flower.”

*Sur la feuille ron . . . don, don, don,*  
*Sur la joli, joli, feuille ronde.*

## EN ROULANT MA BOULE.

THE wind is fresh, the wind is free

*(En roulant ma boule)—*

The wind is fresh—my love waits me !

*(Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant,*

*En roulant ma boule roulant,*

*En roulant ma boule.)*

Behind our house a spring you see,

In it three ducks swim merrily.

Hunting, the prince's son went he,

With silver gun right fair to see ;

At the three ducks aimed carefully,

Fired at the black, the white killed he.

King's son, ill luck thy portion be,

My own white duck is killed by thee.

## En roulant ma boule

Beneath his wing his blood flows free,  
And diamonds in his eyes there be,

And gold and silver plenteously  
Pour from his beak upon the sea.

His feathers to the wind blow free,  
Gathered them in fair women three,

To make a bed right soft to see

*(En roulant ma boule)*—

Where travellers to sleep are free

*(Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant,*

*En roulant ma boule roulant,*

*En roulant ma boule).*

## MALBROUCK

MALBROUCK has gone a-fighting  
    (*Mironton, mironton, mirontaine*)—  
Malbrouck has gone a-fighting,  
    But when will he return ?

Perchance he'll come at Easter,  
    Or else at Trinity term.

But Trinity term is over,  
    And Malbrouck comes not yet.

My lady climbs her watch-tower,  
    As high as she can get.

She sees her page approaching,  
    All clad in sable hue :

“ Ah ! page, brave page, what tidings  
    From my true lord bring you ? ”

## Malbrouck

- “ The news I bring, fair lady,  
Will make your tears run down ;
- “ Put off your rose-red dress so fine  
And doff your satin gown.
- “ Monsieur Malbrouck is dead, alas !  
And buried too, for aye ;
- “ I saw four officers who bore  
His mighty corse away.
- “ One bore his cuirass, and his friend  
His shield of iron wrought ;
- “ The third his mighty sabre bore,  
And the fourth—he carried nought.
- “ And at the corners of his tomb  
They planted rosemarie ;
- “ And from their tops the nightingale  
Rings out her carol free.

## Malbrouck

“ We saw above the laurels  
His soul fly forth amain ;

“ And each one fell upon his face  
And then rose up again.

“ And so we sang the glories  
For which great Malbrouck bled ;

“ And when the whole was ended  
Each one went off to bed.

“ I say no more, my lady  
(*Mironton, mironton, mirontaine*)—  
I say no more, my lady,  
As nought more can be said.”



## GAI LON LA, GAI LE ROSIER

“BEHIND my father’s house  
A wood there is so gay,  
The nightingale sings there,  
All night and all the day.”  
*Gai lon la, gai le rosier,  
Du joli moi de Mai.*

“He sings for those fair dames  
Who have no husbands gay ;  
He singeth not for me,  
Mine is—is far away.

“I have a husband brave,  
But he is far from me,  
A prisoner to the Dutch,  
In Holland bideth he.”

“What wouldst thou give him, love,  
Who brought him back to thee ? ”

Gai lon la, gai le rosier

“ Oh, he should have Sorel,  
Quebec and Saint-Denys ! ”

“ Oh, he should have Quebec,  
Sorel, and Saint-Denys ! ”

“ Dost know this ring, my love ? ”

“ Oh, joy, joy !—thou art he ! ”

*Gai lon la, gai le rosier,  
Du joli moi de Mai.*

## CECILIA

ALTHOUGH my father's only child,  
He sent me o'er the ocean wild.

*Sautez, mignonne Cecilia,  
Ah ! ah, Cecilia !*

Over the seas and far away,  
Borne by a sailor bold and gay.

Borne by a sailor bold and gay,  
Who fell in love with me each day.

He fell in love with me each day ;  
“ Ah, sweet ! one little kiss, I pray.

“ One little kiss for all my care.”  
“ Alas ! alas ! I'd never dare.

“ For if I did,” she whispered low,  
“ My cruel father 'd surely know.

## Cecilia

“ And should he know your love for me,  
A sorely punished maid I’d be.”

“ Now, foolish maid, we’re far away,  
How could your father know, I pray ? ”

“ How could my father know, you say ?  
He’d hear it from the wood-doves grey.”

“ But even though the doves might sing,  
He’d never know the tale they bring.”

“ He would not understand, think you ?  
They speak good French—and Latin too.”

“ Now may his evil neck be wrung  
Who taught the doves the Latin tongue.”

*Sautez, mignonne Cecilia,*

*Ab ! ah, Cecilia !*

## ISABEAU S'Y PROMÈNE

ISABEL, of the lily-white hand  
    (*The wind is sighing in the sedge*),  
Was walking alone on the brown sea sand  
    (*By the water's edge, the water's edge*).

There she met three sailors blithe and strong  
    (*The wind is sighing in the sedge*),  
And the youngest sang a wonderful song  
    (*By the water's edge, the water's edge*).

And the maiden listened and listened long  
    (*The wind is sighing in the sedge*) ;  
“ Fain would I learn the wonderful song ”  
    (*By the water's edge, the water's edge*).

“ My bark rides yonder on the sea  
    (*The wind is sighing in the sedge*),  
So come and I will teach it thee  
    (*By the water's edge, the water's edge*)

## Isabeau s'y promène

But when they had reached the sailor's bark

*(The wind is sighing in the sedge)*

The maiden's sunny brows grew dark

*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

What evil chance hath happened thee

*(The wind is sighing in the sedge)*

That tears in those blue eyes I see ?

*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

The ring my mother gave to me

*(The wind is sighing in the sedge)*

Is fallen into the deep blue sea

*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

Oh ! dry thine eyes, my lady fair

*(The wind is sighing in the sedge),*

And I will dive and find it there

*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

He dived once into the deep blue sea

*(The wind is sighing in the sedge)—*

## Isabeau s'y promène

Never a ring to the top brought he  
*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

He dived twice into the deep blue sea  
*(The wind is sighing in the sedge),*  
And the ring it flashed right gallantly  
*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

He dived thrice into the deep blue sea  
*(The wind is sighing in the sedge) ;*  
Never again to the top came he  
*(By the water's edge, the water's edge).*

## MARIANSON

“ Ah ! Marianson, my beauteous dame,  
Where is your lord and master gone ? ”

“ My lord rides to the battle-plain ;  
I know not if he'll come again.”

“ Ah ! Marianson, my lady fair,  
Lend me your rings of gold so rare.”

“ In the iron chest beside my bed  
You'll find the rings,” she sweetly said.

“ Now, goldsmith, fashion me with care  
Three golden rings of metal rare—

“ Three golden rings of fashion rare,  
Like those that Marianson doth wear.”

When he receives his golden rings,  
Upon his steed he lightly springs ;



## Marianson

The first he meets upon the road  
Is Marianson's haughty lord.

“ Fair greetings now, bold cavalier !  
What tidings do you bring me here ? ”

“ Of tidings new I bring you none,  
Save of the Lady Marianson.”

“ Ah ! Marianson, my lady fair !  
She's faithful always, I boldly swear.”

“ I say not ‘ yes ’—I say not ‘ no ’ ;  
But see—the rings from her hands of snow.”

“ You lie ! you lie ! bold cavalier,  
My wife is faithful far or near.”

His wife stood on the ramparts high ;  
She saw her lord ride wildly by.

Her heart stood still with a sudden fear,  
When she marked his face as he drew anear.

## Marianson

“ Now, mother, show our new-born child ;  
Its grace will calm his anger wild.”

“ My son, behold your son and heir ;  
What name wilt thou give the babe to bear ? ”

He cried, “ I’ll give the child a name  
That will fill its mother’s life with shame.”

He has seized the infant in its mirth,  
And thrice has dashed it to the earth.

And Marianson, that lady fair,  
He has tied to his horse by her golden hair.

Three days, three nights, he rode like wind,  
And never cast a look behind.

Till, at the close of the third long night,  
He turned and looked on that awful sight.

“ Ah ! Marianson, my lady fair,  
Where are your golden rings so rare ? ”

## Marianson

“ In the iron chest beside my bed  
You’ll find the rings,” she sadly said.

He has ta’en the keys with an evil grace,  
And has found the rings in their hiding-place.

“ Ah ! Marianson, my lady fair,  
You shall have the best chirurgeon’s care.”

“ The best chirurgeon I would crave  
Is a fine white sheet for my quiet grave.”

“ Ah ! Marianson, my beauteous dame,  
Will God e’er pardon all my shame ? ”

“ My death is pardoned now,” she smiled,  
“ But never that of our helpless child.”

## J'AI PERDU MON AMANT

*He*

I'VE lost my love, in sooth ;  
For that my care is light ;  
What small despite I feel  
Will soon have vanished quite.  
For mourning I will wear  
A suit of satin fine,  
My only tears shall be  
Of wine.

*She*

What have I done, my love,  
That thus displeases thee ?  
Have I not loved thee, dear,  
As thou hadst right to be ?  
I've loved thee ; love thee now ;  
I'll love thee, dear, for aye,  
For thee my heart shall beat  
Always.

J'ai perdu mon amant

*She*

At home the house is now  
A solitary place,  
Where one but seldom sees  
The light of lover's face.  
And those we love so well,  
With all love's tender pain,  
We love to dream we'll see  
Again.

*He*

Were I a swallow swift,  
Towards thee, my heart's delight,  
O'er all these rocky wilds  
I'd quickly wing my flight.  
There, safe from all the storm,  
Soft nestling in thy breast,  
I'd tell thee all my pain,  
At rest.

## JAMAIS JE NOURRIRAI DE GEAI

I KEPT my jay for seven years  
In my round cage so bright,  
And at the end of seven years  
My sweet jay took his flight.

*Oh, gai !*

*I'll never keep a jay again,  
Ah ! never more I'll keep a jay.*

And at the end of seven years  
My jay his flight has ta'en ;  
“ Come back, my jay, my pretty jay,  
Come to your cage again.

“ Come back my jay, my pretty jay,  
Come back once more to me ” ;  
To which my saucy jay replied,  
“ I'll play the madcap free.

Jamais je nourrirai de geai

“ I’ll play the madcap free for once,  
For once I’ll play the fool—  
To Paris fair I’ll straight repair,  
And there will found a school.

“ To Paris fair I’ll straight repair,  
And there a school will found,  
To which all ladies fair will come  
From all the city round.

“ Oh ! all the ladies fair will come  
Unto my school so gay ;  
I’ll choose the fairest of them all,  
And send the rest away.”

*Oh, gai !*

*I’ll never keep a jay again,  
Ah ! never more I’ll keep a jay.*

## DANS LES PRISONS DE NANTES

IN Nantes prison underground  
Hand and foot is the prisoner bound.

No one sees him, night or day,  
But the gaoler's daughter young and gay.

She carries him a daily store  
Of bread and water, nothing more.

One day he asked her suddenly,  
“What have the people said of me ? ”

“The people all have said of thee,  
To-morrow thou diest on gallows tree.”

“Since I must die, I pray thee, sweet,  
Undo these fetters from my feet.”

The girl has stooped her willingly,  
And soon the prisoner's feet are free.



## Dans les prisons de Nantes

The prisoner stood up fearlessly,  
And cast himself into the sea.

At the first plunge the eddies sweep  
In the deep centre of the deep ;

At the second plunge they parted wide,  
And he came out safe on the farther side.

He turned him round defiantly,  
And I trow a merry song sang he :

“ God bless all women where’er they be,  
And the gaoler’s daughter especially.

“ If I see Nantes again, by my life  
The gaoler’s daughter shall be my wife ! ”

## BRIGADIER

Two men-at-arms came riding slowly  
Adown the green path, smooth and clear,  
One held the rank of sergeant lowly,  
The other that of brigadier.  
The brigadier cried, " Brave Pandore,  
The weather's fine—no sign of rain."  
" Brigadier," laughing cried Pandore,  
" Brigadier, right you are again ! "

" It is no easy matter, surely,  
To guard the peasant in his cot,  
To hold the cities so securely  
That thieves break in and plunder not ;  
And yet the wife whom I adore,  
In safety dwells where Love doth reign."  
" Brigadier," laughing cried Pandore,  
" Brigadier, right you are again ! "

## Brigadier

“ For Glory’s wreath of fairest flowers  
With rose and laurel intertwined,  
For Love and War, immortal powers,  
I live—and cast the rest behind.  
The power that Jason led of yore  
I chase, and trust the prize to gain.”  
“ Brigadier,” laughing cried Pandore,  
“ Brigadier, right you are again ! ”

“ It brings bright days of youth before me ;  
That Past now gone beyond recall :  
When Beauty flung her fetters o’er me,  
I came submissive to her call.  
And yet—the heart breaks o’er and o’er  
The strongest links of Cupid’s chain.”  
“ Brigadier,” laughing cried Pandore,  
“ Brigadier, right you are again ! ”

As Phœbus hid his glories under  
The golden clouds that veil the west,  
Our hero with his voice of thunder  
Still broke the evening’s quiet rest,

## Brigadier

“ Farewell ! ” he cried, “ on distant shore  
Your light will gild both hill and plain.”

“ Brigadier,” laughing cried Pandore,  
“ Brigadier, right you are again ! ”

He ceased—and now their horses’ tramping  
Fell softly on the yielding ground,  
And save their iron bridles’ champing,  
They passed along and made no sound ;  
But when Aurora smiled once more  
One still might hear the faint refrain—  
“ Brigadier,” laughing cried Pandore,  
“ Brigadier, right you are again ! ”

A SAINT-MALO, BEAU PORT  
DE MER

SAINT-MALOES looketh on the sea ;  
'Three ships there in the harbour be.

'Three ships there in the harbour be,  
Laden with grain right heavily—

Laden with grain right heavily.  
'To buy it forth went women three—

'To buy it forth went women three.  
“Merchant, what may your prices be ?

Merchant, what may your prices be ? ”  
“Six francs the corn, the oats for three—

Six francs the corn, the oats for three.”  
“Too dear by half your prices be—

A Saint-Malo, beau port de mer

Too dear by half your prices be.”

“ If better you can elsewhere see—

If better you can elsewhere see,

Then take it all and take it free—

Then take it all and take it free ;

At that price we shan't disagree.”

## TROIS FILLES D'UN PRINCE

BEHIND my father's house  
There is a pleasant tree,  
The leaves upon its boughs are green,  
The fruit like gold to see.

It was a king's three daughters  
Asleep beneath a tree.  
The youngest said, " My sisters,  
The light of day I see."

Then up and spake the eldest,  
" In all the skies above,  
I only see a single star  
That shines to light my love.

" My love has gone to battle,  
Down by the distant sea,  
And if he win the battle,  
His meed my love shall be."

## Trois filles d'un prince

Then up and spake the fairest  
    (And her sweet eyes were wet),  
“Whether my knight shall win or lose,  
    His shall my love be yet.”

So then those three fair sisters  
    Looked to the skies above ;  
“Oh, let them win, or let them lose,  
    Theirs always is our love.”



## C'ÉTAIT UNE FRÉGATE

A FRIGATE went a-sailing  
    (*Mon joli cœur de rose*)  
Far o'er the seas away  
    (*Joli cœur d'un rosier*).

A gentle maid was weeping  
Beside the smiling bay.

“ Ah ! tell me, sweet, what sorrow  
Bedims your eyes to-day ? ”

“ Ah ! sir, I've lost my ring of gold,  
Deep 'neath the waters grey.”

“ And if I find it, gentle maid,  
What will you give, I pray ? ”

“ Alas ! kind sir, I'm poor, and nought  
Have I to give away ;

C'était une frégate

Unless my heart is wage enough  
For my ring beneath the bay."

He threw aside his cloak, and plunged  
Deep where the jewel lay.

The first strong plunge he almost touched  
The golden ring so gay.

The second time, it moved and rang,  
But lured him on alway.

But at the third, the lover bold  
Was drowned. Ah, mournful day !

And with the tide that gallant heart  
Swept seaward o'er the bay.

His father from his turret sees,  
And bows his head so grey.

" Alas ! that for a maid, my son  
*(Mon joli cœur de rose)*  
Should throw his life away,  
*(Joli cœur d'un rosier) ! "*

D'OÙ VIENS-TU, BERGÈRE ?

“WHENCE art thou, my maiden—  
Whence art thou ? ”

“I come from the stable  
Where, this very night,  
I, a shepherd maiden,  
Saw a wondrous sight.”

“What sawest thou, my maiden—  
What sawest thou ? ”

“There within the manger,  
A little babe I saw,  
Lying softly sleeping  
On the golden straw.”

“Nothing more, my maiden—  
Nothing more ? ”

“I saw the Holy Mother  
The little baby hold,  
And the father, Joseph,  
A-tremble with the cold.”

D'où viens-tu, Bergère ?

“ Nothing more, my maiden—  
Nothing more ? ”

“ I saw the ass and oxen  
Kneeling meek and mild,  
With their gentle breathing  
Warm the Holy Child.”

“ Nothing more, my maiden—  
Nothing more ? ”

“ There were three bright angels  
Come down from the sky,  
Singing forth sweet praises  
To the Father high.”

## SONG OF CADIEUX

THOU little rock of the high hill, attend !  
Hither I come this last campaign to end !  
Ye echoes soft, give ear unto my sigh,  
In languishing I speedily shall die.

Dear little birds, your dulcet harmony  
What time you sing makes life dear with me.  
Ah ! had I wings that I might fly like you,  
Ere two days sped I should be happy too.

Lone in these woods I've known cares with-  
out end,  
Pondering for aye the fate of each dear friend;  
I ask myself, "Alas ! and are they drowned ?  
Or by the Iroquois so ruthless found ? "

Once as I wander, to my great surprise  
On my return I see a smoke arise ;

## Song of Cadieux

“Great God,” I cry, “what was it that I  
saw ?

My hut is taken by the Iroquois.”

Then for a while I crouched without the  
shade,

That I might see if 'twere an ambuscade.

A joy too great filled up my heart to see

The faces of three men, of Frenchmen three.

Then my voice chokes, my knees give way,  
and lo !

I fall, alas ! and they prepare to go !

I am alone, and none console me may,

Although death comes in such a cruel way !

A howling wolf crept to my cabin nigher,

To see if smoke still rose up from my fire.

To him I said, “Go, coward brute and fierce,

Or, by my faith, thy grey coat I will pierce.”

A sable crow that flew in search of food,

Perched on a tree in my near neighbourhood.

## Song of Cadieux

To him I said, “Gorger of human flesh,  
Go elsewhere, seek a meal not quite so fresh.

“Go deeper in the wood, hard by yon  
swamp,

There, in the Iroquois’ abandoned camp  
Thou wilt find all the flesh thou covetest ;  
Go farther on, and leave me to my rest.”

O nightingale, go tell my mistress true,  
My little ones, I leave them my adieu,  
That I have kept my love and honour free,  
And they henceforth must hope no more of  
me.

Here, then, it is the world abandons me—  
But I have help, Saviour of man, in Thee.  
Most Holy Virgin, do not from me fly !  
Within your arms, oh ! suffer me to die.

## THE BUFFALO HUNT

(PIERRE FALCON)

Now list to the song of the buffalo hunt,  
Which I, Pierre the rhymester, chant of  
the brave !

We are Bois-Brûles, Freemen of the plains,  
We choose our chief ! We are no man's  
slave !

Up, riders, up, ere the early mist  
Ascends to salute the rising sun !  
Up, rangers, up, ere the buffalo herds  
Sniff morning air for the hunter's gun.

They lie in their lairs of dank spear-grass,  
Down in the gorge, where the prairie dips,  
We've followed their tracks through the  
sucking ooze,  
Where our bronchos sank to their steaming  
hips.



## The Buffalo Hunt

We've followed their tracks from the rolling  
plain,  
Through slime-green sloughs to a sedgy  
ravine,  
Where the cat-tail spikes of the marsh-grown  
flags  
Stand half as high as the billowy green.

The spear-grass touched our saddle-bows,  
The blade-points pricked to the broncho's  
neck ;  
But we followed the tracks like hounds on  
scent,  
Till our horses reared with a sudden check.

The scouts dart back with a shout, " They  
are found ! "  
Great fur-maned heads are thrust through  
reeds,  
A forest of horns, a crunching of stems,  
Reined sheer on their haunches are  
terrified steeds.

## The Buffalo Hunt

Get you gone to the squaws at the tents, old  
men,

The cart-lines safely encircle the camp !  
Now, braves of the plain, brace your saddle-  
girths !

Quick ! load guns !—for our horses champ.

A tossing of horns, a pawing of hoofs,  
But the hunters utter never a word—  
As the stealthy panther creeps on his prey,  
So move we in silence against the herd.

With arrows ready and triggers cocked,  
We round them nearer the valley bank ;  
They pause in defiance, then start in alarm  
At the ominous sound of a gun-barrel's  
clank.

A wave from our captain, out bursts a wild  
shout,  
A crash of shots from our breaking ranks,

## The Buffalo Hunt

And the herd stampedes with a thunderous  
boom,  
While we drive our spurs into quivering  
flanks.

The arrows hiss like a shower of snakes,  
The bullets puff in a smoky gust,  
Out fly loose reins from the bronchos' bits,  
And hunters ride on in a whirl of dust.

The bellowing bulls rush, blind with fear,  
Through river and marsh, while the  
trampled dead  
Soon bridge safe ford for the plunging herd ;  
Earth rocks like a sea 'neath the mighty  
tread.

A rip of the sharp-curved sickle-horns,  
A hunter falls to the blood-soaked ground !  
He is gored and tossed and trampled down ;  
On dashes the furious beast with a bound.

## The Buffalo Hunt

When over sky-line hulks the last great  
form,  
And the rumbling thunder of their hoofs'  
beat, beat,  
Dies like an echo in distant hills,  
Back ride the hunters chanting their feat.

Now, old men and squaws, come you out  
with the carts !  
There's meat against hunger and fur  
against cold !  
Gather full store for the pemmican bags,  
Garner the booty of warriors bold.

So list ye the song of the Bois-Brûles,  
Of their glorious deeds in the days of old,  
And this is the tale of the buffalo hunt,  
Which I, Pierre the rhymester, have  
proudly told.



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